Ready to start planning your care? Call us at 800-525-2225 to make an appointment.
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Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

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Give to MSK

Feverfew may benefit patients with migraine headaches .

One or more compounds found in feverfew are thought to prevent migraines. One such compound, parthenolide, was found to block the formation of inflammatory proteins. A feverfew extract was shown to reduce the number of migraine attacks and also decrease the mild headache that occurs before a migraine attack. Feverfew also showed anticancer effects in lab studies. Human studies are needed.

What are the potential uses and benefits?

- To prevent migraine headaches
  A few studies support this use. Post-feverfew withdrawal syndrome (consisting of muscle stiffness, anxiety, headaches, nausea, and vomiting) can occur after patients discontinue using this herb.
- To treat arthritis
  Although compounds in feverfew show anti-inflammatory activity in the laboratory, a clinical trial did not support this use.

- To relieve painful and heavy menstruation
  No scientific evidence supports this use.
- To treat psoriasis
  Although compounds in feverfew show anti-inflammatory activity in the laboratory, human data are lacking.

What are the side effects?

- Stomach upset
- Red, itchy rash
- Mouth ulcerations when chewing fresh feverfew leaves
- Withdrawal symptoms (post-feverfew syndrome): May occur when patients stop taking feverfew after a long period of time. These include muscle stiffness, anxiety, moderate pain, headache, nausea, and vomiting.

What else do I need to know?

Do Not Take if:

You are allergic to ragweed, chrysanthemums, marigolds, or other members of the Compositae family .
You are taking Cytochrome P450 3A4 substrate drugs : Feverfew may increase the risk of side effects of these drugs. Clinical relevance is not known.
You are taking anticoagulant/antiplatelet drugs: Feverfew may increase the risk of bleeding. Clinical relevance is not known.

If you have any questions, contact a member of your care team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5 p.m., during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.
Feverfew - Last updated on June 20, 2023

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